

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 21966 160405Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 ACDA-12 /091 W
-----076872 170227Z /66

R 131801Z SEP 78 VOL SVC TO ALL
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6761
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 21966

USSALTTWO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET LEADERSHIP: BREZHNEV'S SEPTEMBER 12
TV APPEARANCE

REF: MOSCOW 18864 (NOTAL)

1. EVENING TV NEWS PROGRAM "VREMYA" SEPTEMBER 12 CARRIED
FILM OF BREZHNEV MAKING AWARDS TO SOVIET AND GDR
COSMONAUTS. IF HIS PERFORMANCE ON THIS OCCASION WAS
TYPICAL OF HIS CURRENT STATE OF HEALTH, WE WOULD SAY
THAT HE IS IN ONLY marginally BETTER SHAPE NOW THAN HE
WAS PRIOR TO HIS CRIMEAN VACATION, IN EARLY JULY. AS
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INDICATED REFTTEL, WE THOUGHT HIS PERFORMANCE THEN WAS
RELATIVELY POOR. WHILE HIS HEALTH HAS NOT VISIBLY
DECLINED, NEITHER HAS IT VISIBLY IMPROVED MUCH FOLLOWING
HIS VACATION.

2. HIS AWARD SPEECH WAS BRIEF: IT TOOK LEONID IL'ICH
JUST UNDER FIVE MINUTES TO READ THE ADDRESS, AND, AS

SEEMS USUAL FOR HIM, HIS PERFORMANCE IMPROVED SOMEWHAT
AS HE WENT ALONG. THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF HIS
PERFORMANCE WERE NOTEWORTHY:

--HE READ HIS REMARKS SLOWLY AND MECHANICALLY,
ALMOST WITHOUT INFLECTION;

--HIS VOICE SEEMED TO QUAVER AT THE BEGINNING BUT THEN
BECAME MORE STEADY;

--HE SLURRED AND PAUSED SEVERAL TIMES, AND, IN LINE
WITH RECENT PRACTICE, ON AT LEAST THREE OCCASIONS
VERBAL FLUFFS WERE EDITED OUT OF THE AUDIO TAPE;

--HIS FACIAL FEATURES SEEMED NORMAL, ALTHOUGH HE
LOOKED AS THOUGH HE MIGHT HAVE GAINED SOME WEIGHT
WHILE ON VACATION.

3. A SOMEWHAT POIGNANT MOMENT OCCURRED IN THE CEREMONY
WHEN SOVIET COSMONAUT BYKOVSKIY PRESENTED BREZHNEV
WITH A PORTRAIT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY THAT THE TWO
COSMONAUTS HAD AUTOGRAPHED DURING THEIR SPACE FLIGHT.
THE PORTRAIT OF LEONID IL'ICH --SHOWING A CLEAR-EYED,
SQUARE-JAWED INDIVIDUAL PERHAPS IN HIS MID-60'S--
CONTRASTED MARKEDLY WITH THE JOWLY, GREY-HAIRED
BREZHNEV STANDING BEFORE THE TV CAMERAS. GARRISON
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Message Attributes

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